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(Number 151.)

A HARD CASE.

A Farce,

IN ONE ACT.

BY THOMAS PICTON,

Author of "A Tempest in a Tea-Pot," "There's no Smoke without Fire," "'Tis Better to Live than to Die," "Cupid's Eye-Glass," "A Tell-Tale Heart," etc., etc.

TO WHICH ARE ADDED

A description of the Costume—Cast of the Characters—Entrances and Exits—
Relative Positions of the Performers on the Stage, and
the whole of the Stage Business.

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A HARD CASE.

A Farce,

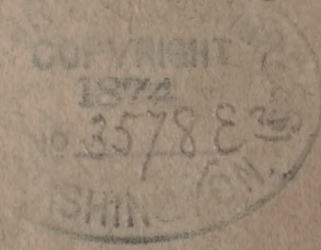
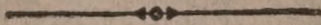
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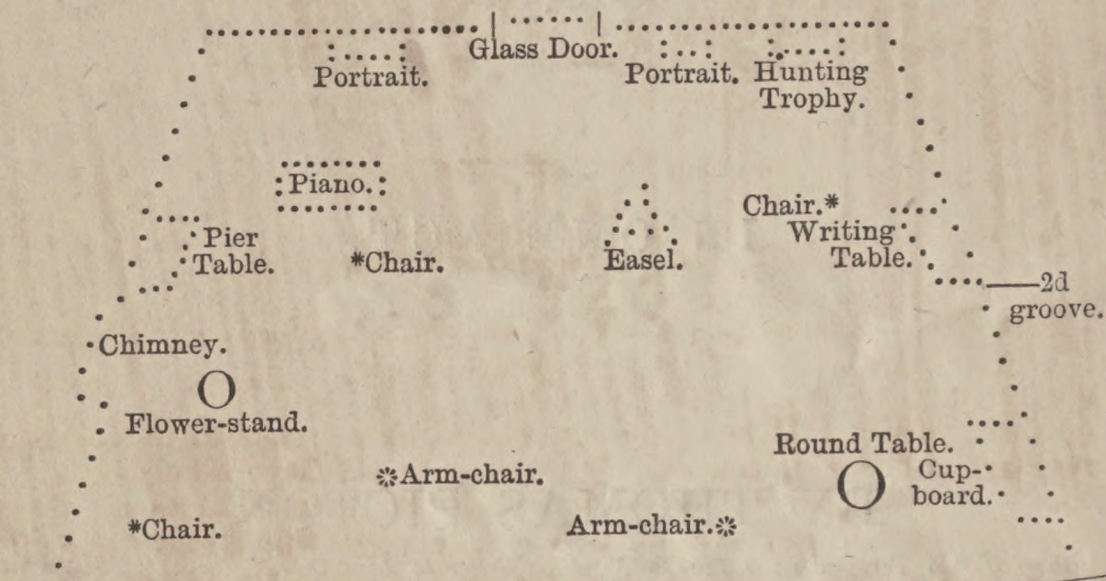
CHARACTERS.

Jeremiah Elms (a mysterious individual).....
 Solomon Easy (a Gentleman of leisure and means).....

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SCENERY.

SCENE.—A Drawing-Room in a country house. A glass door at back, opening



upon garden. Lateral doors R. and L., at 2d grooves; L., at 1st groove, a small cupboard, containing everything necessary for breakfast; on R., a chimney-piece, before which is a flower-stand furnished with flowers; at L., 2d groove, a writing-table with pens, ink, and paper; at back, on L., a hunting trophy, among the objects of which is remarked a horn and a sword; at back, on R., an upright piano; on R., between chimney and door, a pier table. In front, at R., a large arm-chair; at L., a round table, on which is a glass of water. At back, two portraits, one of EASY, the other of his wife; a second arm-chair and other chairs; an easel with a painting on it, on the top of the easel a smoking-cap.

COSTUMES.

JEREMIAH ELMS.—Thread-bare black coat, mixed gray pantaloons, shoes well worn, no neck cloth, ragged shirt.

SOLOMON EASY.—Fine black suit, white waistcoat, patent leather boots, white neck-tie.

SYNOPSIS.

SOLOMON EASY, a wealthy gentleman, living retired, is disturbed, at his country residence, through hearing the branches broken off a tree, upon which he observes a man attempting suicide. Although constitutionally indolent, EASY cuts down the man, who announces himself as JEREMIAH ELMS, a seedy adventurer, apparently. The unwelcome guest takes possession of EASY's apartment, invades his garden, eats his peaches, exchanges with him coat, watch, and snuff-box, besides demanding breakfast, which he devours while indulging in a boisterous song. Finally JEREMIAH declares himself to be the lover of EASY's wife, daughter and niece, as well as his determination to live and die with him. To ease himself of this disturber of his peace, EASY writes a note to CHRISTOPHER NARR, a lawyer, promising consent to his marriage with his niece upon condition of expelling the intruder. JEREMIAH takes the paper, and proves to be the suitor of EASY's niece, adopting this annoying style of conduct to make the acquaintance of an uncle who had never before seen him.

[For Properties, etc., see last page.]

A HARD CASE.

SCENE.—*A drawing-room in a country house.*

At the rising of the curtain EASY is discovered, lolling lazily in his large arm-chair.

EASY (*alone*). I'd like to know what time it is, but, then, to look at my watch is a formality necessitating action, and I have a holy horror of motion. The dream of my life is a perpetual want of motion. Here I am fifty years of age, with five thousand dollars annual income, a brunette for a wife, a blonde for a daughter, and a golden-haired niece. We dwell at our ease in the country, afar from noise and annoyances, never making calls or receiving visitors. I get up at ten, breakfast at eleven, dine at five, sup at nine, and go to bed at ten. And the next day I do the same over again. That's been our regular habit for thirty years, and we have been the happiest of mortals—I have, at least,—and it has become a second nature. Some people believe that they can't live without excitement; bah! I hate anything like sensations, good or bad. True, my wife grumbles, but can't she amuse herself without me? My repose is in this garden of the Hesperides, of which I am the dragon. For example: a young man, whom I don't know, a certain Christopher Narr, attorney at law, whom I never want to see, has fallen in love with my niece's golden locks, and has asked her hand in marriage. My niece encourages the idea, but I don't; a wedding makes a pile of trouble, and they may even want me to dance at it. (*yawns, when is heard the sound of a limb of a tree breaking*) Hollo! who's breaking my trees? (*goes to door at back, and opens it*) Heavens and earth! what's this? A gymnast, a rope-dancer? No, it can't be a rope-dancer—he'd dance on a rope; this fellow is dancing from one. It's a man hanging himself beneath my nose. I'll stop that thing. (*stops short*) No, I won't. He's discontented with his lot, and so hangs himself. If I cut him down, he will tell me his sorrows, and that will make me miserable, besides disarranging my nervous system. (*closes door*) Suppose I haven't seen anything. (*hesitates*) If I don't cut him down my conscience will revolt and conjure up the nightmare and bad digestive organs. (*goes to trophy and takes down sword*) It must be done; (*sighs*) but that fellow must be a hard case to hang himself right over my door step. (*opens the door*) I don't know who he is, but here goes. (*he cuts the cord on the outside, and JEREMIAH, with a cord around his neck, falls into EASY's arms*) Can't you walk, sir? (*JEREMIAH, who wears threadbare vestments, leans his head on EASY's shoulder*) Oh! you're crushing me to pieces! (*he drags him to the arm-chair, and makes him be seated*) Poh! I've enough of this job. (*he replaces the sword, and seats himself to R.*) He don't move! oh, heavens! if

he should die! (*rises*) I can't be accused of murder, (*looks around him*) and nothing to bring him to. (*sees glass on round table*) Yes, my glass of orange water. (*throws water in JEREMIAH'S face, who makes a start*) He comes to! (*places glass on chimney*) A strange thing. (*removes cord from JEREMIAH'S neck, and places it likewise on chimney*) The cord hasn't even left a mark! If I had thought and gone for a policeman—I'm infernally sorry for having cut down this vagabond.

JEREMIAH (*drawing himself up, and staring around him*). Your humble servant, sir; you're the gentleman who cut me down?

EASY. Yes, sir.

JER. Then the devil take you. (*arises.*)

EASY. What did you observe?

JER. What did you interfere for, sir?

EASY. To tell the truth, I——

JER. When I hang myself I have reasons for it.

EASY. Just what I said to myself.

JER. And that didn't stop you? All right—you have accepted the consequences of your action.

EASY. I don't comprehend.

JER. I was an unfortunate wretch, and wished to put an end to my sorrows and trials. In preventing my so doing, you assumed a tacit engagement to render me happy—that is the case, and it was very kind in you.

EASY. What's that? (*aside*) He ain't in his right mind as yet; patience, and see how I'll walk him through the door in a moment or two.

JER. Yes, from the moment you forced me to live, you entertained the intention of supplying me with the means for so doing. I have nothing more to say.

EASY. (*aside*). He's cracked. (*aloud*) Yes, yes.

JER. Say you so? From this second forward I am your obliged servant. You have done me a favor I never can forget. Allow me to embrace you?

EASY. I can do without it.

JER. Pardon me, sir, I think otherwise. It is my right, sir, (*tries to embrace EASY, who struggles to prevent it*) my privilege, sir, my holy duty.

EASY. I've not shaved this morning.

JER. (*leaving him free*). Then I'll embrace you to-morrow.

EASY. Ah! you reckon upon coming again.

JER. No, I reckon upon not going away.

EASY (*frightened*). How?

JER. Do you take me for an ingrate? I quit you, my preserver, my guardian angel? Never! Stop—I am tempted to embrace you despite your beard.

EASY (*disengaging himself*). Sir, I am touched, yes, profoundly touched, by your gratitude; but I am afraid of detaining you longer; so, if you have any business on hand—(*he shows him the door.*)

JER. Business—what would you have me do? When I hung myself it was for want of something to do; for a man in business hasn't time to hang himself.

EASY. Oh!

JER. Hence make yourself easy; I've time—and you?

EASY. I—I——

JER. Very well. I'll relate the story of my sorrows.

EASY (*aside*). Just as I said. (*aloud*) Sir!

JER. I'll reveal you all, except my name, however, and for a good reason—I have none.

EASY. Eh!

JER. It's interesting, ain't it? Let's be seated.

EASY. Well, then. (*he moves towards the arm-chair, but JEREMIAH installs himself in it, and pushes a chair towards him.*)

JER. You'll take the trouble to——

EASY. It's useless, sir.

JER. I'll talk when you're seated. Oh! make up your mind. (*EASY is about to seat himself*) By the way, you may prefer the arm-chair? (*makes a gesture of rising.*)

EASY. I confess to you——

JER. Well, just as you say. (*he stretches himself out at ease in the arm-chair, and places his legs on EASY's chair, who goes grumbling in search of another*) Where are you?

EASY (*placing chair and taking seat*). I'm here.

JER. Very well. I informed you that I had no name, that is to say, no Christian name; but I took myself in my own arms, held myself up to the baptismal font, constituted myself my own sponsor, and christened myself Jeremiah. That's a pretty name, ain't it?

EASY. Very pretty.

JER. You speak as if you don't like it.

EASY. I beg your pardon, I do like it.

JER. If it displeases you, say so plainly, and I'll take another. How does that suit you?

EASY. But I swear to you——

JER. So much the better. But Jeremiah alone would never do. (*observing EASY to appear distracted, he arises, and speaks louder*) But Jeremiah alone would never do.

EASY. I understand—you need not repeat it. (*arises in vexation, and sets his chair near round table.*)

JER. Very good. I said to myself, Jeremiah is but a Christian name, although originally belonging to a Jew, and as it would not do for Jeremiah to stand alone in the world, I searched among the trees for a protector, and tumbled upon two elms; hence, joining the three together, I made Jeremiah Elms.

EASY. Happy marriage.

JER. An interesting idea?

EASY. Exquisite. (*JEREMIAH reseats himself, and places his legs as before.*)

JER. It might have done for thirty years ago, but, Mister—how do you style yourself?

EASY. Solomon Easy.

JER. Well, Easy Solomon, times have changed since I was born. Jeremiah was scriptural, and could stand the ravages of time, but Elms, being made from trees, was liable to decay. Consequently, as elms are decidedly vulgar in plain English, I lopped off one elm and, by the aid of a French dictionary, transformed the other into Orme, or, more aristocratically, into Del'Orme. Which do you prefer, my Solomonic Easy?

EASY. I'm indifferent. Continue.

JER. I can only continue after you have made your choice. What say you, old boy?

EASY (*aside*). The familiar brute! (*aloud*) Del'Orme.

JER. Del'Orme be it, as you prefer it.

EASY. But I don't prefer it. (*aside*) If he keeps on with this terrible story.

JER. As you say. But I have forgotten to tell you——

EASY (*nervously*). Excuse me! excuse me. You have told me.

JER. Sir, wine, cards, and sensible women are the only gifts infusing into me joy; so I drank, I gamed, I loved so deeply that I have swallowed up my entire fortune—a handsome sum, placed at my disposal

when I reached the age of puberty. I've passed that point, and you too, Solomon. (*he takes his legs from off the chair—EASY seats himself.*)

EASY (*aside*). The fellow bores me without putting me to sleep. (*he takes a pinch of snuff from a gold snuff-box; JEREMIAH takes the box out of his hand, puts the snuff up his nose, and places box in his own pocket.*)

EASY. My snuff-box, sir.

JER. Here is another one, Master Solomon. (*gives him a pewter box, battered and tarnished.*)

EASY. What can I do with this piece of trumpery?

JER. Just the thing for the country! (*EASY makes a movement of bad temper, and puts the box in his pocket*) I had hoped to remove the stain from my escutcheon, to have assumed that social position I could adorn, but the father of my wealthy, but faithless, fair one refused his consent to her marriage with Jeremiah—Del'Orme, wasn't it, old boy?

EASY (*pettishly*). Yes, sir, Del'Orme.

JER. In short, bankrupt in hope and in capital, houseless, moneyless, nameless, and crossed in love, it only remained to me to rob the world of one of its elegant ornaments. With my last dime I took a final drink, with that cord (*pointing to it on mantel-piece*) I made my parting cravat, and leapt wildly into mid air, when that blessed knife——

EASY. It was a sword, sir.

JER. Don't contradict me. When that blessed knife of yours put an end to my aerial fandango.

EASY (*rising, and taking his chair to back, R., against the easel*). Have you finished?

JER. Yes, sir. What do you ask for? Do you want me to recommence?

EASY. No! But I thought they might be anxious about you at your home.

JER. My home! I have no home; have men, who have been hung, homes? Moreover, sir, I repeat that I could never, in such a wise, desert my preserver.

EASY. You must, sooner or later.

JER. Never, sir, never.

EASY (*affrighted*). How! never? Do you intend to install yourself here?

JER. I count upon here terminating my career.

EASY. Terminating your—but it seems to me——

JER. It seems to you! that's coming it too strong, forsooth! You have then unhung me only to extort my wretched history, and would force me to hang myself anew, after listening to my tale of sorrow.

EASY. Well, sir.

JER. Very well, indeed. I recognize my benefactor, and await the progress of his benefactions. I await, sir, until you procure for me all the joys of earth within your power, and those with brief delay—right away.

EASY (*remonstratingly*). But, sir—but, sir—

JER. If you do not render me the happiest of mortals, I will withdraw; and, in that case, you will be my assassin.

EASY (*aside*). Good, good, good!

JER. (*going up*). To commence. (*he takes off his own threadbare coat, and puts on a handsome one, which he finds on a chair at the back, L., before the piano.*)

EASY. Hullo! what are you about there?

JER. (*crosses to R.*). I have the misfortune to be badly attired?

EASY. That's my ball dress-coat, sir.

JER. You go to balls then? I'll go with you.

EASY (*throwing himself upon JEREMIAH*). Will you give me back that coat?

JER. How! give it back to a man of many coats? You're destitute of all conscience, that you are.

EASY. Ah!

JER. After all, I'm a good fellow; since you must have this coat, take it in exchange for your own.

EASY. Is that your game?

JER. I can do nothing better. Take or leave it.

EASY. He fleeces me! (*takes off his coat.*)

JER. (*doing the same*). Say now, it is not a bad bargain for you. You gain by it.

EASY. That means I lose less. (*they exchange coats, and put them on, the one laughing the other growling.*)

JER. Now I am presentable. It is not luxurious but passable. (*drawing a purse out of one of the pockets*) And, moreover, it is well lined.

EASY. My purse!

JER. (*putting the purse back into pocket*). Excuse me; this coat is my property, and the proceeds of the property belong to its owner. (*he takes his seat at the round table.*)

EASY. This has ceased to be a joke.

JER. (*leaning his head upon his breast, and appearing to listen to a voice addressing him*) Eh?

EASY (*loudly*). Again, sir!

JER. Hush! (*to himself*) Please, sir? Have I breakfasted? No I have not breakfasted.

EASY. What's that?

JER. As I am given to fits of abstraction, I have charged my stomach to announce every time I am hungry, and, just now, it rung the breakfast bell.

EASY. Very ingenious on your part, and it should not be left to languish. Good day, sir.

JER. (*aside, and arising*). He don't seem to have taken the hint. (*aloud, going to the door at back, through which he looks out*) Hullo! peaches! (*attempts to go out.*)

EASY (*restraining him*). My peaches! the best peaches in my garden!

JER. Oh! I have no preference—besides there are others. (*shakes EASY off, and disappears into garden.*)

EASY. But, sir—

JER. (*reappearing almost instantly*). I'll come back. (*disappearing, and reappearing*) Make your mind easy—I'll come back. (*disappears.*)

EASY (*alone, at back*). Where is he going? Sir! There he is, breaking down branches to bring the fruit within reach. Sir! sir! He's trampling on the flower beds. (*a noise is heard of glass breaking*) There goes my hot-house glasses. Mr. Del'Orme! have mercy on the melons, do, Mr. Del'Orme! (*he falls, overpowered, into an arm-chair*) Ah! the beggar! and it was I who cut him down. Another warning against meddling with other people's business. Oh, lord! how to get rid of him! (*arises, and goes to back*) Mr. Del'Orme, come here, come here; I want to speak to you. I'll be down sick, that's sure.

JEREMIAH re-enters, eating a peach.

Can't you be a little more quiet.

JER. Nothing suits me better; but first to breakfast; that's rational!

EASY (*bitterly*). Rational!

JER. You refuse! (*he re-ascends.*)

EASY. Oh, no!

JER. Where is the dining-room?

EASY. No! no! we breakfast *tete-a-tete*. (JEREMIAH comes forward) My men are in the field, and I likewise, my wife is out shopping, my daughter is visiting, and my niece is sick abed.

JER. (*enthusiastically*). Then you have a wife, a daughter, and a niece?

EASY (*aside*). I've put my foot in it.

JER. They're out, you say? that's unfortunate; but I'll have better luck at dinner.

EASY (*stupefied*). At dinner?

JER. And so, to prevent my making them wait, have the kindness to regulate my watch by yours. (*takes down a lady's watch hanging by the chimney.*)

EASY. My wife's watch! a watch set with diamonds.

JER. I'd be a wretched man without a watch!

EASY. So would my wife. (*attempts to seize it.*)

JER. If you really think so I'll restore it.

EASY. That's kind of you.

JER. In exchange for your own.

EASY. He's a downright thief. Should I call for help—(*moun's towards back, and then stops*) but who? I am alone.

JER. (*holding out the watch*). Your mind's made up?

EASY (*aside*). Robber! (*hands him his own watch, and receives the other in exchange.*)

JER. Now to breakfast.

EASY. Yes, sir, you can eat; I have at hand everything you need. (*aside*) The leavings of the table. (*he goes to the little cupboard at R., and takes out provisions.*)

JER. No, not those—not those; the others below—the others.

EASY (*aside*). He has an eye upon everything. (*he takes another dish of provisions.*)

JER. You have splendid silverware, by jingo.

EASY (*with animation*). It's all plated.

JER. Be it so. (*looking around while EASY places knife and fork, etc., on the small round table, and then deposits the edibles*) I can enjoy myself well enough here; a delicious garden, a handsome apartment, very convenient furniture, only the arrangement is unfortunate.

EASY. What are you talking about?

JER. I said the arrangement was unfortunate.

EASY. I'm sorry for it.

JER. It can be remedied. If that writing-desk was there, and the pier table on this side—(*carries the desk to the L. and pier table to the R.*) There, it is already better.

EASY (*quitting the table*). What are you about?

JER. Putting things to right. (*while EASY restores the desk and pier table to their original places, JEREMIAH takes the flower stand and places it in front centre*) The flower stand here.

EASY (*running to him*). Sir! sir!

JER. An arm-chair on each side—thus. (*places one on each side of the flower stand, with backs to audience.*)

EASY (*in anger*). Will you never case?

JER. (*seating himself in arm-chair, L.*). Take a seat, and keep cool.

EASY. I'm done for. (*sinks, out of breath, into arm-chair, R.*)

JER. You have already a totally different appearance. (*point's to EASY's portrait at back*) There, for example, is a villainous countenance.

EASY. It's my portrait, sir!

JER. I agree with you entirely; it is in detestable taste. (*he arises, goes to the back, and turns the picture face to the wall.*)

EASY (*rising*). He turns me around! (*he replaces the flower-stand and arm chairs as originally.*)

JER. You are better looking when viewed from the opposite side. (*taking the smoking-cap from top of easel*) Hold, what's all this?

EASY. My smoking-cap, sir. (*strives to take it from him.*)

JER. Ah! indeed; very well embroidered; your work, Mr. Easy? (*puts it on his head.*)

EASY. He treats my house like a conquered city—it is an actual sack.

JER. (*pocketing the cap*). Yes, a little too large, but still it is warm.

EASY (*furiously*). I sweat all over.

JER. (*seating himself at round table, and helping himself*). Gracious heavens! woodcock! (*takes wine bottle, pours out a glass, and drinks*) Rhine wine, eh? Ah! Solomon, this is unkind in you, this treating me as a stranger. (*drinks again.*)

EASY (*with quickness*). A Bedouin Arab!

JER. Am I not one of the family? (*drinks.*)

EASY. One of the family? (*aside*) How he drinks. I suppose you will likewise want me to give you up my own bed?

JER. Not at all; there are others in the house; three, I think; you know best. (*drinks.*)

EASY (*with horror*) The beast!

JER. You don't eat? If you don't, just give me something in the way of a song.

EASY (*exasperated*). Unheard of impudence!

JER. Well, if you don't sing, I will try my hand at a good old rollicking song. (*drinks*) I give you fair notice that it's of the bacchanalian order. First, a drop to whet my whistle. (*drinks*) I warn you, too, that it is a little long—but we have time on our hands. Now for the first verse. (*drinks*) Hum! (*he sings at full voice*)

Drink of this cup—you'll find there's a spell in

Its every drop 'gainst the ills of mortality—

EASY (*wishing to quiet him*). Sir! sir!

JER. (*singing still louder*).

Talk of the cordial which sparkled for Helen—

Her cup was a fiction, but this is reality.

EASY But, sir—

JER. (*continues singing*).

Would you forget the dark world we are in,

Only taste of the bubble that gleams on the top of it;

EASY (*impatiently*). I must say, sir—

JER. Oh, be quiet, and don't put me out. (*continues to sing*)

But would you rise above earth, till akin

To immortals themselves, you must drain every drop of it.

EASY. This is unendurable!

JER. Chorus now, old fellow. (*continues in a very loud tone of voice*)

Send round the cup—for oh! there's a spell in

Its every drop 'gainst the ills of mortality—

EASY. But, heathen, they'll hear you bellow a mile off!

JER. You exaggerate; I bet they can't. (*continues*)

Talk of the cordial that sparkled for Helen—

Her cup was a fiction, but this is reality!

EASY (*much excited*). I bet they can—

JER. (*drinks*). Taken; let's see who wins. (*continues singing very loud*)

Never was philter formed with such power.

EASY (*beside himself*). Sir, for the last time, I entreat you to murder me outright, but don't kill me by inches.

JER. (*after a pause*). You don't want me to sing? (*arising, and going to piano*) Then I will play the piano.

EASY (*interposing*). It's the piano of my wife, sir!

JER. I see you don't like music; I'm sorry for you; you have a villainous soul; as for me, I'm the reverse. I have a sensitive soul, an artistic nature, and as it wants to spread itself, I'll paint your portrait. (*going towards easel*) I'll paint you full length with a foot or two thrown in.

EASY (*getting between him and easel*). That is the easel of my daughter, sir.

JER. You're a precious bore. Is there no way of amusing one's self here? Ah! I'll give a trumpet blast. (*he takes the horn from the trophy at back, blows a few notes, throws the horn down, and looks outside*) What a lovely figure! what splendid shoulders! if the face only corresponds—

EASY. Whose face?

JER. Out there, in front of us.

EASY (*aside*). My wife!

JER. You said my wife?

EASY. I didn't.

JER. Then you said my daughter?

EASY. Not at all.

JER. You must have said my niece?

EASY. Never. (*aside*) This caps the climax.

JER. Then I'll see for myself who she is. (*goes up.*)

EASY (*catching hold of him, and aside*). In such a headstrong temper. (*aloud*) Stay!

JER. No, I won't; everything I undertake displeases you, and now I will please myself. (*goes up again.*)

EASY. On the contrary, I find you of a most obliging disposition. In the first place, I adore music, and if you would only accommodate me— (*points to piano.*)

JER. No, sir—no! (*he endeavors to go out.*)

EASY. Should you prefer to take my like ness?

JER. No, sir—no! (*attempts to go out.*)

EASY (*running after him*). One word more, sir. (*aside*) We must fight love for love. (*aloud*) Mr. Del'Orme, you were speaking a moment ago of a handsome young girl you loved. Should—

JER. Decidedly not. (*looking at picture, L.*) I've given over girls; I prefer loving married women; it's more spicy. (*desires to go out.*)

EASY. But that is immoral. (*restraining him.*)

JER. Maybe, but that adds zest to the sauce. Besides, my last love repelled me because I was fatherless. We'll speak of her no more. (*crosses to R.*) The haughty minx!

EASY (*following him*). Don't get excited.

JER. And I was on the point of death for her. Fool, madman as I was. (*crosses to L.*)

EASY (*following him*). But if, with a dowry, we could remove her scruples—

JER. Dowry! money! It is a name I need! (*advancing upon EASY*) Ah! you have rebound the half-broken fetters of my existence, and you speak to me of happiness. (*crosses to R.*) You are but a paltry intriguer!

EASY. Mr. Del'Orme!

JER. But I am dreaming. (*returning to EASY*) It is a father I want—adopt me?

EASY. I?

JER. I'll be a second-hand edition of the Prodigal Son. Do you recognize me?

EASY. Yes, yes, I will recognize you—but adopt you—never!

JER. You refuse? Well, so much the better! I prefer your wife! she adores me! I'll write to her; yes, right on the spot—pens, ink, and paper! (*he goes towards the writing-desk, but EASY interposes and places himself before him.*)

EASY. You shall not write!

JER. Cruel man! and I love your wife so tenderly; I will render her so happy!

EASY. Happy with you?

JER. A thousand times more than you can make her! Why not? Look at me—I am young—I am handsome—I am a natural born lover! (*crosses to R.*) I have a heart overflowing with love, and a head dripping over with poetry. As for you—bah! I well knew you had a villainous soul!

EASY. But you shan't have my wife!

JER. Deluded egotist!

EASY. Immoral monster!

JER. After all, if you prefer, give me your daughter.

EASY. My daughter?—never!

JER. Then give me your niece.

EASY. No! no! no!

JER. Then, as you won't give me one, I'll take all three.

EASY. All three!

JER. (*ascending the stage to near the door at back*). Yes, I will plant myself on this threshold; I will take root there; and when they appear——

A VOICE (*coming from the right*). Solomon!

EASY. My wife!

JER. His wife! (*EASY runs to door R., closes it, and pushes in the bolt on the inside.*)

A SECOND VOICE (*coming from garden*). Father!

EASY (*running to close the door at back, while JEREMIAH has reopened that at R.*). My daughter!

JER. (*going to reopen door at back*). His daughter!

A THIRD VOICE (*coming from L.*). Uncle!

EASY (*running to close door L.*). My niece!

JER. (*opening door L.*). His niece!

EASY (*breathing hard*). Sir, it is time this thing finishes. I can't live in mortal agony any longer. (*spasmodically.*)

JER. (*aside*). The catastrophe approaches.

EASY. This morning I interrupted your hanging. Well, I beg your pardon for interfering. Just recommence what you were about, and I pledge my honor I won't cut you down. (*goes to chimney-piece, takes the cord, and presents it to JEREMIAH*) There's enough left to finish up the job.

JER. No, sir, I will not.

EASY. Do it, I entreat you.

JER. No, I tell you!

EASY. Wicked man, do it for my sake.

JER. I have changed my mind—I desire, henceforth, to live, for I love and will be loved.

EASY (*moodily*). You will be loved?

JER. Without a doubt; consequently——

EASY (*gloomily*). You won't hang again?

JER. No! I'll be hanged if I hang myself again.

EASY. In that case it is I who will hang myself.

JER. Easier said than done; I'd like to see you do it. (*takes a seat in the arm-chair near table.*)

EASY. You will have that melancholy satisfaction. (*he puts cord around his neck, but suddenly he beats his forehead, and withdraws the cord*) No, sir, you shall not see it; I'll not waste upon you such a gratification. I have another method, sir—another method! (*he throws the cord to JEREMIAH, who pockets it.*)

JER. (*arising*). Prussic acid? Nicotine?

EASY. I have another method of getting rid of you. Ah! you don't want to go out of here? Ah! you want to marry my wife? You want to marry my daughter and niece? Well, sir, my niece loves another; my daughter does the same, and my wife—(*stops short*) Yes, sir, my niece is dead in love with a dashing young man.

JER. She is dead in love with me.

EASY (*contemptuously*). With you? He is a sterling man.

JER. So am I!

EASY. A high-toned gentleman!

JER. So am I!

EASY. A soldier, covered with war dust and glory!

JER. So am I!

EASY. Your superior in every respect. I will cause him to come here and kick you out by the window. I will announce to him that, on those terms, he will have my consent to his marriage with my niece.

JER. You dare not do it.

EASY. I dare not do it? Wait and see if I don't. (*he seats himself at the writing-desk, and arranges writing materials*) I will give him my niece and a dowry of ten thousand dollars.

JER. You will give both to me.

EASY (*sarcastically*). That would be a capital joke. I will write at once. (*commences to write*) "Christopher Narr, Esq., Attorney at law." (*turning to JEREMIAH*) He is an attorney at law, sir.

JER. So am I.

EASY (*continuing to write*). "My dear Christopher—you have lost nothing by patiently awaiting my decision; my niece loves you and I love you."

JER. I know you love me.

EASY. Bah! (*continues to write*) "I await, in impatience, the moment when I can call you my nephew. My niece shall have a dowry of fifteen thousand dollars." (*turning to JEREMIAH*) What do you think of that, sir?

JER. It is not enough.

EASY. Well, I'll make it twenty-five thousand, to oblige you.

JER. It's very kind on your part.

EASY (*writing*). "You can consider this letter as a contract," (*to JEREMIAH*) as a contract; "and I subscribe myself, while awaiting its being put in form, yours, affectionately, Solomon Easy." (*to JEREMIAH*) I take pride in being named Solomon, sir.

JER. Your parents admired wisdom; did you have a sister Sophia?

EASY. No, sir! (*he folds the letter, and rises from his chair*) Now, I'll dispatch this letter instantly.

JER. To his address? (*takes letter*) It has arrived at its destination. I thank you, uncle.

EASY (*pettishly*). What's that?

JER. (*saluting him*). Christopher Narr, Attorney at law.

EASY. You Christopher Narr?

JER. The identical individual. I merely wished to demonstrate to you that it would be better to have me for a nephew than a lodger. I

have succeeded, haven't I? (*tendring him his hand.*) No ill will between us, uncle.

EASY (*spitefully, and recoiling from him*). No ill will! Pooh! you don't know me.

JER. All in good time. Imitate your namesake, Uncle Solomon; be just and be wise in your judgments. Have I not your signed contract?

EASY. That's all you will get.

JER. Then we will go to law.

EASY. Go to law?

JER. Certainly; law is my business, and, if you don't give me a fortune, I must earn one. In the first place, I'll bring a suit against you; duration, five years; you will lose it, and appeal; we will go from court to court; ten years more; grand total, fifteen years, during the course of which you will become a bankrupt and an incurable lunatic.

EASY. Fifteen years! bankrupt! lunatic!

JER. Believe me, it will be wiser to dance at my marriage. (*extends hand to him.*)

EASY. Of two evils, choose the least, law or dancing. I accept the latter. (*takes the hand*) Nephew, marriage may reform you, but, in your present condition, I am firmly convinced that you are A HARD CASE!

CURTAIN.

PROPERTIES.

Flower-stand with flowers; small cupboard, with everything requisite for breakfast; writing-table; pens, ink and paper; hunting trophy; horn; sword; piano; pier table; two arm-chairs; chairs; round table; glass of water; portraits; easel, painting on it; smoking-cap; cord; two watches; gold snuff-box; pewter snuff-box; handsome coat; money purse; peach; lady's watch; plates, knives, forks, provisions, for breakfast; writing-desk; bottle of wine; glasses; paint; brushes; letter paper.

STAGE DIRECTIONS.


R. means Right of Stage, facing the Audience; L. Left; C. Centre; R. C. Right of Centre; L. C. Left of Centre. D. F. Door in the Flat, or Scene running across the back of the Stage; C. D. F. Centre Door in the Flat; R. D. F. Right Door in the Flat; L. C. F. Left Door in the Flat; R. D. Right Door; L. D. Left Door; 1 E. First Entrance; 2 E. Second Entrance; U. E. Upper Entrance; 1, 2 or 3 G. First Second or Third Groove.

R.

R. C.

C.

R. C.

•  The reader is supposed to be upon the stage facing the audience.

De Witt's Acting Plays—Continued.

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| <p>No.</p> <p>49. The Midnight Watch. Drama. 1 Act. By John M. Morton. 8 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>50. The Porter's Knot. Serio-Comic Drama. 2 Acts. By Joan Oxenford. 8 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>51. A Model for a Wife. Farce. 1 Act. By Alfred Wigan. 3 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>52. A Cup of Tea. Comedietta. 1 Act. By Charles Nutter and J. Derley. 3 Male, 1 Female Characters.</p> <p>53. Gertrude's Money-Box. Farce. 1 Act. By Harry Lemon. 4 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>54. The Young Collegian. Farce. 1 Act. By T. W. Robertson. 3 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>55. Catherine Howard; or, The Throne, the Tomb and the Scaffold. Historic Play. 3 Acts. By W. D. Suter. 12 Male, 5 Female Characters.</p> <p>56. Two Gay Deceivers; or, Black, White and Gray. Farce. 1 Act. By T. W. Robertson. 3 Male Characters.</p> <p>57. Noemie. Drama. 2 Acts. By T. W. Robertson. 4 Male, 4 Female Characters.</p> <p>58. Deborah (Leah); or, The Jewish Maiden's Wrong. Drama. 3 Acts. By Chas. Smith Cheltnam. 7 Male, 6 Female Characters.</p> <p>59. The Post-Boy. Drama. 2 Acts. By H. T. Craven. 5 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>60. The Hidden Hand; or, The Gray Lady of Porth Vennon. Drama. 4 Acts. By Tom Taylor. 5 Male, 5 Female Characters.</p> <p>61. Plot and Passion. Drama. 3 Acts. By Tom Taylor. 7 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>62. A Photographic Fix. Farce. 1 Act. By Frederick Hay. 3 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>63. Marriage at any Price. Farce. 1 Act. By J. P. Wooler. 5 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>64. A Household Fairy. A Domestic Sketch. 1 Act. By Francis Talfourd. 1 Male, 1 Female Characters.</p> <p>65. Checkmate. Comedy Farce. 2 Acts. By Andrew Halliday. 6 Male, 5 Female Characters.</p> <p>66. The Orange Girl. Drama, in a Prologue and 3 Acts. By Henry Leslie. 18 Male, 4 Female Characters.</p> <p>67. The Birth-place of Podgers. Farce. 1 Act. By John Holiingshead. 7 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>68. The Chevalier de St. George. Drama. 3 Acts. By T. W. Robertson. 9 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>69. Caught by the Cuff. Farce. 1 Act. By Frederick Hay. 4 Male, 1 Female Characters.</p> <p>70. The Bonnie Fish Wife. Farce. 1 Act. By Charles Selby. 3 Male, 1 Female Characters.</p> <p>71. Doing for the Rest. Domestic Drama. 2 Acts. By M. Raphino Lacy. 5 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>72. A Lame Excuse. Farce. 1 Act. By Frederick Hay. 4 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>73. Fettered. Drama. 3 Acts. By Watts Phillips. 11 Male, 4 Female Characters.</p> <p>74. The Garrick Fever. Farce. 1 Act. By J. R. Planche. 7 Male, 4 Female Characters.</p> <p>75. Adrienne. Drama. 3 Acts. By Henry Leslie. 7 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>76. Chops of the Channel. Nautical Farce. 1 Act. By Frederick Hay. 3 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>77. The Roll of the Drum. Drama. 3 Acts. By Thomas Egerton Wilks. 8 Male, 4 Female Characters.</p> <p>78. Special Performances. Farce. 1 Act. By Willmot Harrison. 7 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>79. A Sheep in Wolf's Clothing. Domestic Drama. 1 Act. By Tom Taylor. 7 Male, 5 Female Characters.</p> | <p>No.</p> <p>80. A Charming Pair. Farce. 1 Act. By Thomas J. Williams. 4 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>81. Vandyke Brown. Farce. 1 Act. By A. C. Troughton. 3 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>82. Peep o' Day; or, Savourneen Dheelish. (New Dury Lane Version.) Irish Drama. 4 Acts. By Edmund Falconer. 12 Male, 4 Female Characters.</p> <p>83. Thrice Married. Personation Piece. 1 Act. By Howard Paul. 6 Male, 1 Female Characters.</p> <p>84. Not Guilty. Drama. 4 Acts. By Watts Phillips. 10 Male, 6 Female Characters.</p> <p>85. Locked in with a Lady. Sketch from Life. By H. R. Addison. 1 Male, 1 Female Characters.</p> <p>86. The Lady of Lyons; or, Love and Pride. (The Fichter Version.) Play. 5 Acts. By Lord Lytton. 10 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>87. Locked Out. Comic Scene. 1 Act. By Howard Paul. 1 Male, 1 Female Characters.</p> <p>88. Founded on Facts. Farce. 1 Act. By J. P. Wooler. 4 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>89. Aunt Charlotte's Maid. Farce. 1 Act. By J. M. Morton. 3 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>90. Only a Halfpenny. Farce. 1 Act. By Joan Oxenford. 2 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>91. Walpole; or, Every Man has his Price. Comedy in Rhyme. 3 Acts. By Lord Lytton. 7 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>92. My Wife's Out. Farce. 1 Act. By G. Herbert Rodwell. 2 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>93. The Area Belle. Farce. 1 Act. By William Brough and Andrew Halliday. 3 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>94. Our Clerks; or, No. 3 Fig Tree Court Temple. Farce. 1 Act. 7 Male, 5 Female Characters.</p> <p>95. The Pretty Horse Breaker. Farce. 1 Act. By William Brough and Andrew Halliday. 3 Male, 10 Female Characters.</p> <p>96. Dearest Mamma. Comedietta. 1 Act. By Walter Gordon. 4 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>97. Orange Blossoms. Comedietta. 1 Act. By J. P. Wooler. 3 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>98. Who is Who? or, All in a Fog. Farce. 1 Act. By Thomas J. Williams. 3 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>99. The Fifth Wheel. Comedy. 3 Acts. 10 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>100. Jack Long; or, The Shot in the Eye. Drama. 2 Acts. By J. B. Johnstone. 5 Male, 1 Female Characters.</p> <p>101. Fernande. Drama. 3 Acts. By Victorien Sardou. 11 Male, 10 Female Characters.</p> <p>102. Foiled. Drama. 4 Acts. By O. W. Cornish. 8 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>103. Faust and Margueritte. Drama. 3 Acts. By T. W. Robertson. 9 Male, 7 Female Characters.</p> <p>104. No Name. Drama. 4 Acts. By Wilkie Collins. 7 Male, 5 Female Characters.</p> <p>105. Which of the Two. Comedietta. 1 Act. By John M. Morton. 2 Male, 10 Female Characters.</p> <p>106. Up for the Cattle Show. Farce. 1 Act. By Harry Lemon. 6 Male, 2 Female Characters.</p> <p>107. Cupboard Love. Farce. 1 Act. By Frederick Hay. 2 Male, 1 Female Characters.</p> <p>108. Mr. Scroggins. Farce. 1 Act. By William Hancock. 3 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>109. Locked In. Comedietta. 1 Act. By J. P. Wooler. 2 Male, 3 Female Characters.</p> <p>110. Poppleton's Predicaments. Farce. 1 Act. By Charles M. Rae. 3 Male, 6 Female Characters.</p> <p>111. The Liar. Comedy. 2 Acts. By Sam'l Foote. Altered and adapted by Charles Matthews. 7 Male and 2 Female Characters.</p> |
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De Witt's Act

ued.

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No

112. **Not a Bit Jealous.** A Farce, in 1 Act. By T. W. Robertson. 3 Male, 3 Female characters
113. **Cyril's Success.** Comedy, in 5 Acts. By H. J. Byron. 9 Male, 5 Female characters.
114. **Anything for a Change.** Petite Comedy, in 1 Act. By Shirley Brooks. 3 Male, 3 Female characters.
115. **New Men and Old Acres.** Comedy, in 3 Acts. By Tom Taylor. 8 Male, 5 Female characters.
116. **I'm not Meself at all.** An Original Irish Stew. By C. A. Maltby. 3 Male, 2 Female characters
117. **Not Such a Fool as he Looks.** Farcical Drama, in 3 Acts. By H. J. Byron. 5 Male, 4 Female characters.
118. **Wanted, a Young Lady.** Farce, in 1 Act. By W. E. Suter. 3 Male characters.
119. **A Life Chase.** Drama, in 5 Acts. By John Oxenford. 14 Male, 5 Female characters
120. **A Tempest in a Tea Pot.** Petite Comedy, in 1 Act. By Thomas Picton. 2 Male, 1 Female characters
121. **A Comical Countess.** Farce, in 1 Act. By William Brough. 3 Male, 1 Female characters
122. **Isabella Orsini.** Romantic Drama, in 4 Acts. By S. H. Mosenthal. 11 Male, 4 Female characters
123. **The Two Poets.** Farce. By John Courtney. 4 Male, 4 Female characters
124. **The Volunteer Review.** A Farce. By Thomas J. Williams, Esq. 6 Male, 6 Female characters
125. **Deerfoot.** Farce, in 1 Act. By F. C. Burnand, Esq. 5 Male, 1 Female characters
126. **Twice Killed.** Farce. By John Oxenford. 6 Male, 3 Female characters
127. **Peggy Green.** Farce. By Charles Selby. 3 Male, 10 Female characters
128. **The Female Detective.** Original Drama, in 3 Acts. By C. H. Hazlewood. 11 Male, 4 Female characters
129. **In for a Holiday.** Farce, in 1 Act. By F. C. Burnand, Esq. 2 Male, 3 Female characters
130. **My Wife's Diary.** Farce, in 1 Act. By T. W. Robertson. 3 Male, 1 Female characters
131. **Go to Putney.** Original Farce, in 1 Act. By Harry Lemon. 3 Male, 4 Female characters
132. **A Race for a Dinner.** Farce. By J. T. G. Rodwell. 10 Male characters
133. **Timothy to the Rescue.** Original Farce, in 1 Act. By Henry J. Byron, Esq. 4 Male, 2 Female characters
134. **Tompkins the Troubadour.** Farce, in 1 Act. By Messrs. Lockroy and Marc Michel. 3 Male, 2 Female characters
135. **Everybody's Friend.** Original Comedy, in 3 Acts. By J. Stirling Coyne, Esq. 6 Male, 5 Female characters
136. **The Woman in Red.** Drama, in 3 Acts and a Prologue. By J. Stirling Coyne, Esq. 6 Male, 8 Female characters

No

137. **L'Article 47;** or, Breaking the Ban. Drama, in 3 Acts. By Adolphe Belot. 11 Male, 5 Female characters
138. **Poll and Partner Joe;** or the Pride of Putney, and the Pressing Pirate. New and Original Nautical Burlesque. By F. C. Burnand. 7 Male, 6 Female characters
139. **Joy is Dangerous.** Comedy, in 2 Acts. By James Mortimer. 3 Male, 3 Female characters
140. **Never Reckon your Chickens.** Farce, in 1 Act. By Wybert Reeve. 3 Male, 4 Female characters

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